

## House Bill 6374 - Written Testimony

Chairs Elliott and Haskell,

My name is Erica Frost and I am a student at UConn. I am a senior and I live in Brooklyn, Connecticut. After living on Storrs Campus, I feel that this legislation is essential to the safety and well-being of students. Our campus is desperately in need of reform that will protect students from sexual assault. Additionally, we need legislation that will protect and assist student survivors of sexual assault.

I am not a survivor of sexual assault however, I feel the effects of sexual assault on campus and I stand with all survivors. The fear of walking campus alone, the necessity of attending gatherings with a buddy system in place, and having to constantly check surroundings are some of the effects that college students feel out of fear of sexual violence. This is not acceptable.

This legislation is specifically important given the nature of college campuses. With the presence of bars, parties, Greek life, and other social events, college students often engage in drug and alcohol use. It is clear that students under the influence of such substances are at great risk for sexual assault. It is imperative that we provide survivors with amnesty and services when coming forward. College should be a time where students are able to have a safe experience, not where they should fear sexual assault or fear telling authorities about assault that has been committed on them. College is stressful enough without fearing for our safety on a daily basis.

This legislation would surely offer students a feeling of relief. Reporting cases of sexual assault is daunting. Survivors deal with a great deal of pain and trauma and reliving the event can be detrimental to their well-being. Also, admitting to being a survivor is intimidating in today's college climate. We must foster a climate that treats the stories of survivors with care and respect. We must also foster a climate that is diligent about keeping students safe and cracking down on those who have committed sexual assault.

I believe that this legislation is essential for making progress on ending campus sexual violence. Sexual violence on campus is a horrifying reality that must be dealt with. No longer should students be scared to walk or take the bus alone. No longer should students have to fear for their lives when at a gathering with friends. And no longer should survivors feel shame or disrespect for coming forward. This legislation is absolutely necessary to make college life a desirable and safe place to be.

Erica Frost

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